



## Bellaire Public Schools

204 W. Forest Home Ave.  
Bellaire, MI 49615-9565

Mark Brenton, Superintendent/K-12 Principal  
Elizabeth Crouch, Dean of Students  
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Brad Fischer, Athletic Director

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Tuesday, October 12, 2021

This is a statement regarding the closure of the Bellaire Public Schools for the week of October 11, 2021.

As of Friday, October 8, the Bellaire Public Schools were aware of two confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Bellaire Public Schools students. At that time, we chose to remain closed to students and staff on Monday, October 11, to allow our custodial and maintenance staff the opportunity to do an extensive deep cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing our all of our school facilities.

By Saturday (10/9) morning, however, we were notified of four additional confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 between John R. Rodger Elementary and Bellaire Middle/High School. By Monday morning (10/11), we learned of two additional positive cases via communications from students or their parents.

As of today (10/12), in addition to the aforementioned student cases and close contacts, we also have one support staff member who is a presumed positive for COVID-19 and another who is awaiting test results, and we were notified by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan roughly 40 minutes ago of an additional student who tested positive for COVID-19, raising our total number of known confirmed positives to nine (9).

Right now, we have over 50 students between the elementary and MS/HS identified as close contacts – that is, within three feet (3') with masks or six feet (6') without – which is roughly 17% of our student population; these are only the contacts that we know took place during school hours and on school property

In consultation with the Bellaire Public Schools Board of Education and the Michigan Department of Education, as well as in reference to documentation from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, I made the decision, out of an abundance of caution, to close the Bellaire Public Schools for the remainder of the week.

While districts are able to offer remote options, we chose not to do so at this time due to the short turnaround and the requirements set by the State of Michigan involved in doing so. We were simply not able to set up full-day, synchronous online instruction for our entire student population within that timeline. We are working internally to implement a new plan based on these new guidelines should we find ourselves in a situation where we need to shut our schools down again this year.

Our first priority as a district is keeping our kids safe, and our second priority is maintaining viable instructional programs for our students for the long-term. Every decision that we make as a district is in the best interests of our students, and this one was no exception. While it was not an easy decision, I believe that it was the right one for our students, our staff and our community.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Brenton  
Superintendent/Secondary Principal  
Bellaire Public Schools